



# News Release

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## **Coast Guard Cutter Valiant Returns from Caribbean Patrol**

*After 34-day Caribbean counter-narcotics patrol, Coast Guard Cutter Valiant Returns to Mayport*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The 80 member crew of the Coast Guard Cutter Valiant, a 210-foot Medium Endurance Cutter homeported at Naval Station Mayport, will return home Sunday after completing a five-week deployment in support of Joint Inter-Agency Task Force South (JIATF-S).

Coast Guard Cutter Valiant and its crew stopped a go-fast vessel suspected of carrying an estimated 300 kilograms of cocaine, with a wholesale value of \$9.9 million, while on patrol in the Caribbean Sea as part of Operation Martillo.

Valiant's embarked helicopter crew from the Coast Guard Helicopter Interdiction Tactical Squadron, based in Jacksonville, Fla., worked with the U.S. Navy and other international partners and spotted the go-fast vessel with two crewmembers aboard and suspicious cargo on deck. The helicopter crew stopped the vessel and Valiant's law enforcement team arrived on scene and took positive control of the vessel and the two suspected smugglers. The individuals were then transferred to other federal law enforcement officials for further prosecution.

Operation Martillo is a joint, interagency, international operation to deny transnational criminal organizations air, land, and maritime use of Central American transshipment routes for illicit drugs, weapons and cash. Led by the Joint Interagency Task Force South, this operation is focused on sharing information and fusing assets from the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Law Enforcement Agencies, the Department of Homeland Security and European and Western Hemisphere partner nations to counter this threat to U.S. and regional security and stability.

For more information about Valiant, visit <http://www.uscg.mil/lantarea/cgcValiant>

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United States Coast Guard Cutter Valiant (WMEC-621) on patrol in the Caribbean Sea with embarked HH-65 helicopter (Photo by Petty Officer Third Class Justin Brummer, U.S. Coast Guard).